3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

of this symbolism relating to occupations of males and females respectively, is obvious. 842

Many women bear children when they are away in the fields, but help at home is often given. The mothers of the wife and of the husband may not be present at the confinement. No childless woman may be near during the confinement or convalescence. The father may not be present or "the child would be ashamed to be born." Before and during her pregnancy a woman feeds her husband with a prickly plant which is mixed in his food; this makes him faithful to her. 844 [784]

The abdomen is bound after delivery in order to keep the uterus in position. There is a very small amount of bleeding after childbirth; in fact the flow of blood is quite finished in two or three days. The nearer the diet comes to that of the white man the greater the bleeding at delivery. A pregnant woman may not beat a drum, or she will bear a drum. A woman who sees the blood from circumcision of a male will not have any children.

When a female child is born, the umbilical cord is cut with a hoe to ensure that the female will be a good worker in the field. The cord of a male is cut with an arrow to insure good hunting. A newly born child receives a drink of beer, and a cord is tied round its waist. This is not for support; it is the string from which, much later, the lower garment hangs. Girls do not menstruate until they are fifteen or even seventeen years of age. During the months after first menstruation a girl advances rapidly from childhood to womanhood. 841

The medicines that women take to secure abortions are bitter. A woman will refuse quinine because she thinks it will cause abortion. 847 It is certain that twins are welcome among the Ovimbundu, but there are special observances connected with their birth and death. A twin birth is not thought to imply dual fatherhood. Twins are called Njamba ("elephant") and Hosi ("lion"). Although twins are of opposite sexes each receives one of the two names. Njamba is the first born, and Hosi is the second to be delivered. The medicine-man holds a ceremony to cure the mother of twins. The afterbirth of twins is placed in two gourds and carried outside the village for burial by two midwives. The mother of twins must wear round her neck the horn of an antelope given by the medicine-man. She has to blow this when crossing a river, meeting a crowd of people, or seeing a hawk overhead. People laugh at her and in fun say that she is a pig or a bitch. "The woman says the same kind of words to them." Children may be adopted, but they never really 845 597

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The hare is not carried over the shoulder, but has a ceremonial conveyance slung on poles (*owanda*) which are supported on the shoulders of two or even four men. 796 643

Laying the evil of a village on a goat, which is then driven out to die, is an Umbundu custom. The scapegoat ceremony has a cleansing function similar in purpose to the rekindling of fire for the community. Cavazzi pictured and described the scapegoat ceremony in the seventeenth century, and Ngonga informed me that he saw the rite twenty years ago. 783

PROHIBITIONS AND OMENS

There is a taboo against killing *oka kuhu*, which is the yellow-backed duiker. When Ngonga was sick he was forbidden to eat the flesh of the duiker (*ombambi*); neither is this flesh to be eaten by people who suffer from dizziness. In former days women were not allowed to eat eggs. The flesh of sheep and goats is said to be indigestible for children between the ages of three and six years. The flesh of the lion, leopard, and hyena is forbidden as food for the king, but other people may eat it. The king is in fact forbidden to eat the flesh of any animal which has paws; neither may he eat flesh of the bush buck. A medicine-man must not eat flesh of a dog except before a ceremony for curing the sick. The taboo against dog's flesh applies also to the diet of a king. 262 [643]

A woman must not step over the legs of a male, neither must a man step over the legs of a woman; for to do so causes weakness of the knees. A man or woman may step over the legs of a child. 784

Omens are numerous. It is unfortunate to see a snake holding a frog, and the person who observes this should go to the medicine-man at once. When going to a village to be tried by the chief it is bad to meet some one who is carrying a bark rope, as this indicates binding and punishment. If a person who is setting out from home meets a woman carrying corn meal or any other white substance, he or she must take a little of the meal, whiten the face, and all will be well. A fly in the mouth is a good sign, because the fly knows where meat is to be obtained and is trying to lead the way. 787

A stranger visiting a village is pleased when a dog is the first animal to enter the guest house. Dogs are fed, so the entry of a dog is a sign that the visitor will receive food. On the contrary, the appearance of a goat is a bad omen, because goats are not fed; they pick up a frugal living as best they can. Other prohibitions and omens have been mentioned in discussing the pregnancy of women. [574]